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Promoting Women's Wellness

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS

September 1996 Issue #6

Newsletter for the McMaster Research Centre for the Promotion of Women's Health (MRCPOWH)

I UPDATE . . . .

We have now completed year three of the Centre's five year mandate to research issues related to women, work and health. Several projects have been completed, many are ongoing and we have most recently funded an additional six graduate student research projects for the duration of the next eighteen months.

MRCPOWH has inititiated a new **TECHNICAL REPORT SERIES** and three reports are now available for distribution (see page 11). In addition, we continue to publish a number of working papers, which may be ordered from the MRCPOWH office.

Researchers have been actively presenting their work nationally in Toronto, Montreal, St. Catharines, and Ottawa. We hosted workshops on women, work and health at the National Health Promotion Research Conference in Montreal and the International Multidisciplinary Conference on *Teaching to Promote Women's Health* in Toronto.

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MRCPOWH, along with three other partners formed a COMMUNITY/ACADEMY CONSORTIUM to respond to the Women's Health Bureau's call for proposals for Centres of Excellence for Women's Health. While our proposal was judged most worthy, and was selected in Stage I, we were unsuccessful in Stage II of the application. We wish to thank our affiliates and our community partners who contributed their time and effort in support of our proposal. We congratulate the Centres that received funding and we are very pleased that five other Centres will be joining us in researching women's health issues. The funded Centres are:

- *Maritime Consortium*, Dalhousie University, Halifax
- *Consortium-Université de Montréal*, Montreal
- *National Networks on Environments and Women's Health*, York University, Toronto,
- *Prairie Region Centre of Excellence for Women's Health*, Women's Health Clinic, Winnipeg
- *British Columbia Consortium Women's Health*, B.C. Women's Hospital and Health Centre, Vancouver

An important concern which has surfaced this year among the health promotion research centres has been the shift by Health Canada to a population health framework. Participants at the **National Conference on Health Promotion** met to develop a declaration on the complementary dimensions of health promotion and population health. Known as the **"Montreal Declaration"** this document argues that health promotion and population health share a common purpose: "To enable individuals and communities to improve their health and well-being by increasing their control over the determinants of health and well-being." This declaration has been sent to all conference participants for ratification. Its objective is to propose broad research and development directions to guide the work of research teams and the allocation of resources.

In the meantime, the **Canadian Public Health Association** presented its Perspectives on Health Promotion at its annual conference in Vancouver in July. On the 10th anniversary of The Ottawa Charter, it has published its **Action Statement for Health Promotion in Canada**.

As we move into the next two years, we will be seeking publication for a book of powerful stories from women in the Hamilton Region about women, work and health. Plans are underway to organize a conference on women, work and health. We also plan to collect papers for an edited book on women, work and health and to publish the results of many of our research initiatives in our working paper and technical report series, as well as in academic journals.

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II MRCPOWH WORKSHOP SERIES

All workshops were well attended by faculty, students and community representatives and provided a forum for stimulating discussions. Many thanks to **Kamlesh Minocha,** a 3rd year student of Sociology, for her competent help in ensuring effective publicity and public relations.

WORKSHOP #14

On January 23rd, 1996, **Kathleen Cruttenden,** Ph.D. from the School of Urban and Regional Planning and Program in Gerontology of the University of Waterloo, shared her findings on **"Participatory Planning with an Aging Population for Policy Making"**. Kathleen Cruttenden had just defended her thesis on "The Policy Analysis of Ontario's Long-Term Care Reform Based on Moral Political Theory, Expert Knowledge and Experience of ADRD Care-Givers and Long Term Care Planners".

In her presentation, she focused on **Alzheimer and its related stresses** suffered by caregivers, the majority of them being women, and the challenges caregiving represents for government services where the population is growing and aging. The purpose of her research was to create an interface between individuals and systems. Her work uses critical theory and a feminist qualitative standpoint. The caregivers' mental and emotional health is affected by the following factors, which intensify as the needs of the Alzheimer patient increase: stress related to an overwhelming sense of obligation towards the patient/partner; a sense of loss of the person (memory loss, loss of reasoning of the partner); a sense of fear (fear of family disintegration, of financial difficulties, of abuse); an immense responsibility faced by the caregiver; and a difficult or impossible communication. However, the caregivers expressed a sense of satisfaction derived from their commitment and from the received appreciation whenever the patient was able to convey it.

Kathleen Cruttenden noted the importance to caregivers of continuing education on the disease and on the issues they face. She also stressed the importance of what she called "the fraternal groups" of caregivers which she helped create. Those groups proved to be vital for the purpose of information sharing, mutual support and empowerment, social interaction, particularly in more rural areas where care givers are isolated.

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On February 5th, **Karen Messing**, a known researcher on women's occupational health, from l'Université du Québec à Montréal, spoke on behalf of CINBIOSE, the Centre for the Study of the Biological Interaction between Health and the Environment, on **"Light Work: A Heavy Burden for Women Workers"**. The workshop, presented by the Labour Studies Programme, was co-sponsored by MRCPOWH and by the Programme for Research on Occupational Safety and Health. Karen Messing reported on a Participatory/ Action Research project which looked at **light and heavy work in a hospital cleaning service**. She noted that work-induced problems are often invisible to the women themselves, so are health problems, thus the title of the book, ***Invisible Issues in Women's Occupational Health,*** which she co-edited with Barbara Neis & Lucie Dumas (Gynergy, 1995).

Her team's research consisted in organizing focus groups with employees and observation of work activity to identify determinants of occupational health, and to propose strategies to change some of those determinants. It involved the joint participation of the employer & the union's occupational safety committee.

The cleaners listed problems that affected them such as: a perceived lack for respect for their work, the invisibility of their work, feeling rushed, poor equipment and not being consulted when equipment needed to be changed, crowded workspace, traffic in the hallways or the hospital and exposure to chemicals and to infections with no information provided. Workers also complained that what was cleaned did not stay so for very long. The observation and data collection included the timing of tasks, a table of postures (angle; duration; flexion/extension, etc), and a sample of what is being moved in six minutes.

After reading the report, the participants met and suggested improvements such as better communication strategies aimed at leaving proof of completed work, in order to make the invisible work visible (eg. lights on; curtains moved). Those suggestions were successfully implemented. Also, perception of what is light and what is heavy work proved to be misleading, and both concepts may become fused as a consequence. This will prevent repetitiveness of work and gender stereotyping (eg. light work = women's work), as well as allow for more flexibility. Karen Messing remarked that stress and lack of respect were of bigger concern to the workers than ergonomics.

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WORKSHOP #15

On March 19th, **JoAnn Kingston-Riechers** presented a workshop on "**Selected Estimates of the Costs of Violence Against Women**", with co-presenters **Lorraine Greaves and Olena Hankivsky**, from The Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children in London. The report is now published through the London Centre. JoAnn is presently a PhD candidate in the Department of Economics at McMaster where she researches probabilities of violence against women and how to prevent it. She is also a recipient of a MRCPOWH grant.

The study was based on a 1993 Statistics Canada Survey (a first in the world) on "Violence Against Women", in which 12,000 women over 18 were surveyed. The costs of three forms of violence against women were estimated: sexual assault/rape, woman abuse in intimate relationships and incest/child sexual assault.

The cost estimation includes the cost of perpetration (eg. loss of income if incarceration occurs) and the cost incurred by a third party such as the cost of visits or court expenses. Only partial estimates of costs of violence can be provided, as complete data are lacking. Costs occur in four policy areas:

Social Services/Education:	$2,368,924,397
Criminal Justice:	$ 871,908,583
Labour/Employment	$ 576,764,400; and
Health/Medical	$ 408,357,042
For a total selected estimate of costs of	$4,225,954,322

The costs are: to the state - 87.5%; to the individual - 11.5%, to the third parties - .9%.

Lorraine Greaves (Project Manager) and Olena Hankivsky (Research Associate) discussed the benefits and problems that arise when undertaking this kind of research. Benefits derive from looking at the economic impact of a social issue, an approach to which governments and policy makers are always sensitive, especially during hard economic times. Bringing to light the hidden cost also helps convey the severity of the problem; it helps us understand the connection between the safety of women and it's economic aspect; and it helps us to evaluate programmes and policies. Such a study is likely to have an important ripple effect on other potential areas of research. However, it remains very difficult to measure the psychological cost of violence against women, and the cost of the loss of a life.

Health Promotion is the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve, their health.

Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion

Workshop #16

On April 23th, **Chris Sinding**, MSW, and a recipient of a MRCPOWH grant, shared her research experience in a workshop entitled: "**Counting on Desire: Supporting Lesbians with Breast Cancer**". Chris initiated and coordinated the WEB, a support group for a lesbian with breast cancer and she came accompanied by Lesley, and her partner, Ruth, as well as other members of the WEB.

The workshop was highly interactive. Lesley told her story: from the shock upon receiving the news that she was the victim of breast cancer until her present-flourishing - state of heath. She attributed a great deal of her recovery to the WEB. It is a story about organizing offers of help that poured in after the news was shared with friends. A coordinator was needed to make help as constructive and as unobtrusive as possible, as more than 30 women were involved, and more joined in as casual helpers. A community emerged; women cleaned, cooked, drove, created a garden in the shape of a web and celebrated friendship and healing. Through a newsletter, the WEB communicated with the "geographically challenged people" i.e.: the circle of friends and relatives from the rest of Canada and from England. It was argued that structuring help was help in itself; it also helped alleviate the overwhelming feeling of indebtedness that Lesley and Ruth felt and it forced them to give up some control and keep their energies to focus on the treatment.

A member of the audience asked: "What was unique and important about this being a lesbian network?" Chris Sinding explained that services (eg. healthcare, homecare) or the work environment tend to be more "husband friendly" than "lesbian partner friendly" and one wants to be spared homophobia during such trying times.

Becoming open and public, this project has also contributed to inform breast cancer organisations and services to understand better the needs of lesbians with breast cancer.

III PARTICIPATION AT CONFERENCES

Margaret A. Denton, Işık Urla Zeytinoğlu and Karen Barber, **"Home as the Workplace: Healthy Work Environments for Home Support Workers."** Paper presented at the *Canadian Sociology and Anthropology Annual Meetings, Learned Societies*, St. Catharines, June, 1996, and the *Canadian Association of Gerontology Meetings*, Vancouver, October, 1995.

Margaret A. Denton, Işık Urla Zeytinoğlu and Karen Barber, **"Home Health Care the Loss of Control: Healthy Work Environments for Home Support Workers."** Paper presented at the *Canadian Sociology and Anthropology Annual Meetings, Learned Societies*, St. Catharines, June, 1996 and the *Thirteenth Annual McMaster Summer Institute on Gerontology*, June 6, 1996.

Margaret A. Denton, Işık Urla Zeytinoğlu and Karen Barber, **"Healthy Work Environments in Community Based Health and Social Service Agencies."** Paper presented at the *Fourth Canadian Conference on Health Promotion*, Montreal, June 9-12, 1996.

Maroussia Hajdukowski-Ahmed, Myrna Pond and Işık Urla Zeytinoğlu, **"Immigrant Women, Work and Health Promotion"**, presented at the *Fourth Canadian Conference on Health Promotion*, Montreal, June, 1996.

Maroussia Hajdukowski-Ahmed, Myrna Pond, Işık Urla Zeytinoğlu, **"Participatory Action Research, Immigrant Women and the Exchange of Knowledge and Skills in Health Promotion Projects."** Paper presented at the International Multidisciplinary Conference, *"Teaching to Promote Women's Health"*, Toronto, June 13-15, 1996.

***Maroussia Hajdukowski-Ahmed*, "A Theory for Who? Immigrant Women Reshape Participatory Action Research. An Experience in Feminist Critical Pedagogy."** Paper presented at the International Multidisciplinary Conference, *"Teaching to Promote Women's Health"*, Toronto, June, 1996.

Maroussia Hajdukowski-Ahmed chaired the session on **"Women and Aging"** at the *Thirteenth Annual McMaster Summer Institute on Gerontology*, June 6, 1996.

Mary O'Connor chaired the session **"Women and Health Promotion"** at the *Fourth Canadian Conference on Health Promotion*, Montreal, June, 1996.

Mary O'Connor, Jacqueline Low, Julia Shelley, **"Lessons for the Doctors: Women with Chronic Disability Inform their Physicians."** Paper presented at the International Multidisciplinary Conference, *Teaching to Promote Women's Health,* Toronto, June'96.

Mary O'Connor, Jacqueline Low, Julia Shelley, **"Health Promotion with Women with Multiple Sclerosis."** Paper presented at the *Fourth Canadian Conference on Health Promotion*, Montreal, June 96.

Jacqueline Low, Julia Shelley, Mary O'Connor, **"Problematic Success: An Account of 'Top Down' Participatory Action Research with Women with Multiple Sclerosis,"** presented at the *13th Qualitative Analysis Conference*, McMaster University, May 1996.

Işık Urla Zeytinoğlu, Margaret Denton, Maroussia Hajdukowski-Ahmed & Mary O'Connor, **"Women's Work & Health: A Critical Review of the Literature."** Paper presented & Abstract published at the *1996 Business and Health Care: A Work & Health Perspective Conference*, Toronto, May 1-2, 1996.

Işık Urla Zeytinoğlu, Muriel Westmorland, Pam Pringle, Margaret Denton, Vera Chouinard, **"Exploring Work & Health Relations with Women with Disabilities."** Paper presented at the *9th Conference of the International Association of Health Policy*, Montreal, June 13-16, 1996.

Margaret Denton, ***Işık Urla Zeytinoğlu***, Pam Pringle, and Karen Barber, **"Health & Safety in Women's Work: The Case of Homecare Worker."** Paper presented at the *9th Conference of the International Assoc. of Health Policy*, Montreal, June 13-16, 1996.

Işık Urla Zeytinoğlu and ***J. Norris***, **"Reasons for Choosing Among Employment Relationships in Service Sector Multinational Headquarters,"** presented at the *33rd Annual Conference of Canadian Industrial Relations Association*, May 29-31, 1996, St. Catharines. This paper was also accepted for presentation and proceedings of the *International Association of Management Annual Conference*, Aug. 2-6, 1996, Toronto.

Margaret Denton, Işık Urla Zeytinoğlu, ***Pam Pringle*** and Karen Barber, **"In their Words: The Effect of Work on Health in Female Dominated Homecare Occupations and Workplaces,"** presented at the

33rd Annual Conference of Canadian Industrial Relations Association, May 29-31, 1996, St. Catharines.

Işık Urla Zeytinoğlu, Muriel Westmorland, Pam Pringle, Margaret Denton, Vera Chouinard **"Positive Work Environments for Women with Disabilities."** Paper presented at the *Fourth Canadian Conference on Health Promotion*, Montreal, June, 1996.

Işık Urla Zeytinoğlu was a discussant for the session **"Women and the Distribution of Work"** for the *June 1996 Conference on the Changes in Working Time in Canada and the United States.*

Işık Urla Zeytinoğlu organized & chaired sessions on **"Women & Work"** and **"Nonstandard Forms of Employment & Implications for Industrial Relations,"** at the *33rd Canadian Industrial Relations Conference*, May 1996, St. Catharines.

UPCOMING CONFERENCES

Seminar - The Hospital of Tomorrow: What Role Will it Play? Groupe de recherche interdisciplinaire en santé (GRIS), Université de Montréal, Montreal, October 2-4, 1996. Contact Linette Cohen (514) 343-6171.

Societal Trends and Choices: Implications for An Aging Population, Canadian Association on Gerontology, Quebec City, October 17-20, 1996. Telephone: (613) 728-9347, fax (613) 728-8913.

"Together" Conference organized by the Settlement and Integration Services Organization of Hamilton (SISO). Participants will examine the impact of violence experienced and/or witnessed by immigrant, refugee and global majority women and their children. Self Help Centre, Hamilton, October 3, 1996. Contact: Maria Antelo, Conference Organizing Committee, (905) 521-9917 or fax (905) 521-9216.

Violence Prevention in Hamilton-Wentworth Working Conference, a working conference on violence prevention in Hamilton-Wentworth to be held on October 31, and November 1, 1996 at the Hamilton Convention Centre. Contact Ronald Bayne (905) 525-2663.

The Changing Face of Community Care, Sixth National Home Care Conference, November 3-6, 1996, Winnipeg, Manitoba. For further information contact: Amanda George, and Logstix Inc., Toronto, 1-800-465-9670 or fax: (416) 593-1805.

An International Conference: Violence, Abuse and Womens Citizenship, Brighton, UK, November 10-15, 1996. Contact: Violence Abuse and Womens Citizenship Conference, Fax +44/1274 385370, e-mail: vagrru@bradford.ac.uk.

Immunizing for Health - Achieving our National Goals, Canadian Immunization Conference, organized by the Laboratory Centre for Disease Control, Health Canada and the Canadian Paediatric Society, December 8-11, 1996, Toronto, Ontario. Contact: Chuck Schouwerwou, Conference Coordinator, Fax (613) 998-6413.

IV NEW PROJECTS OF GRADUATE STUDENTS

MRCPOWH has completed its funding of graduate student projects. We are proud to have stimulated the research on woman's health at McMaster by providing twenty-one grants (ten to graduate students) for a total of $63,500.

Karen Barber, Dept. of Sociology, **"Senior Women and Community Formal Home Support Health and Social Care Services: Match or Mismatch?"**

Barbara Dabrowska-Chudyk, School of Social Work, **"Canadian Accreditation of Immigrant Female Physicians in Hamilton. Cost-Benefit Analysis and Mental Health Issues, using PAR."**

Theresa Garvin, Department of Geography, **"They were Blond and Tan: Women's Perceptions of Tanning, Health & Well-Being."**

Jennifer Hoyle, Department of Sociology, **"Leisure and Women with Disabilities: New Directions for Subjective Experience."**

JoAnn Kingston-Riechers, Dept. of Economics, **"An Economic Model of Domestic Violence."**

Janet Romaine, Human Resources/Labour Relations, MGD School of Business, **"Factors that Influence Participative Decision-Making by Managers."**

V CURRENT RESEARCH PROJECTS FUNDED BY MRCPOWH

Healthy Work Environments in Community Based Health and Social Service Agencies

The report entitled **Healthy Work Environments in Community Based Health and Social Service Agencies Stage One Report: Focus Group Findings** is now complete and is available as a MRCPOWH Technical Report. It presents the findings from 19 focus groups with 121 homecare workers who met to discuss their work and health. Findings from these focus groups have been used to develop a questionnaire which will be mailed to all paid employees and a sample of volunteers from the three participating agencies. Questions address both work-related stress and phyiscal health problems as well as possible work-related sources of these health problems. Those interested in the project may contact: Margaret Denton, 525-9140, ext. 23923, mdenton@mcmaster.ca.

"The illness rates are going up and our injury rates are sky high as well and I think part of that is morale. Their social and emotional well-being is being played out in their physical health."

a focus group participant, "Healthy Work Environment in Community Based Health & Social Service Agencies Stage One Report:Focus Group Findings".

Intergenerational Advisory Group

MRCPOWH is working together with seniors, and the Department of Public Health Services in a participatory action research project to promote seniors to volunteer to work with children in schools in Hamilton-Wentworth. In a survey in 1991 and later in a Forum in 1993, a group of seniors identified loneliness and isolation as their primary concern. The goal of this project is to provide an opportunity for older adults to decrease their loneliness and isolation by participating in intergenerational activities. The group is working to develop opportunities in schools for seniors to volunteer and to find seniors to fill these volunteer positions. We will be working to evaluate our progress over the next year. Those interested in the project may contact: **Margaret Denton**, tel 525-9140, ext. 23923, e-mail: mdenton@mcmaster.ca, or Lily Shalmi-Dolina, tel. 546-3588.

Violence Prevention in Hamilton-Wentworth Working Conference

MRCPOWH is one of a number of participating agencies who are working together to prepare for a working conference on violence prevention in Hamilton-Wentworth to be held on October 31, and November 1, 1996 at the Hamilton Convention Centre. Through the collaborative efforts of the many agencies concerned with violence and violence prevention, the Working Conference will help identify the issues that contribute to violence locally, and the practical actions that could be taken to prevent violence in Hamilton-Wentworth. Those interested in the project may contact: **Ronald Bayne** at (905) 525-2663.

Immigrant Women/Work and Health

Maroussia Hajdukowski-Ahmed, Principal Investigator, **Myrna Pond**, Research Assistant, and **Işık Urla Zeytinoğlu**, Consultant, are working on the reports of the following projects which are completed or near completion:

Myrna Pond, with Maroussia Ahmed and the participants of the **Worksite/Action group** have completed their report on the process of resolving occupational health and equity issues in a food plant. After being approved by the participants, the report will be submitted to MRCPOWH as a working paper.

Myrna Pond, Maroussia Ahmed and Isik Urla Zeytinoglu (as a consultant) are completing a report on the coordination of health promoting activities of the **Advisory Group** (Capacity building, networking, advising action/research groups, "Share and Tell" meetings with immigrant women organisations).

Maroussia Ahmed is preparing a report on the work accomplished by the **Shanti Niketan Action/ Research group** on South Asian women and mental health issues.

Maroussia Ahmed, with the members of **De Mujer a Mujer Action/Research grou**p, is preparing a report. For the past two years, De Mujer a Mujer has functioned as a support group, as a focus group to identify and research issues relevant to the health of Latin American Women in the community, as an

advisory and planning committee for its health promoting activities. Following an outreach programme, in the Spring of 1996, the group has organized eleven workshops, nine on self-esteem; "Rediscubriendo mi potencial" conducted by Patricia Grunauer-Spinner, a social worker from the Hamilton Catholic Family Services; one workshop on breastcare conducted by Linda Currie from the Department of Public Health; and one workshop on Sexual Care conducted by Betty Vance and Betty Valens from the Department of Public Health. Rebeca Rivera acted as translator for the last two workshops. One workshop on parenting is planned for the Fall, conducted by Patricia Grunauer-Spinner. The North Hamilton Community Health Centre and the Hamilton Catholic Family Services have supported those activities by offering space, childcare facilities and community support. We are most grateful to them.

"We may speak with an accent, but we don't think with an accent."

Nora from De Mujer a Mujer quotes from the movie "A Walk in the Clouds"

De Mujer a Mujer is entering the next stage of its action/research. The group will incorporate their experience and the voices of community women in the collective writing of an educational and health promoting play which will be performed in 1997. The play will be written with the collaboration of a Spanish expert in popular theatre. Mona Nahmias, director of the Alchemist Theatre of Hamilton will act as a consultant.

The **Survivors of Torture Action Group** (Minoo Farragheh, Myrna Pond) continues to function as a support group. Myrna Pond and Minoo Farragheeh have conducted in-depth interviews of six women survivors and a report will follow.

Nazilla Khanlou and Maroussia Ahmed have completed nine focus groups in a local high school on **"South Asian High School Women Research the Effects of their Contextual Experiences on their Mental Health and Design and Implement Strategies to Promote their Mental Health"**. Nazilla Khanlou, a PhD candidate in the Faculty of Nursing, has written a course paper on the project. With Maroussia Ahmed she will write a report which will be submitted to MRCPOWH as a working paper.

Barbara Dabrowska-Chudyk, with Maroussia Ahmed, Denise Maraj, Carolina Vidal, have collected data, conducted an outreach programme, conducted two focus groups with eight **immigrant/refugee/ foreign trained female physicians**. Issues of accreditation and integration of female physicians were discussed and researched. At the end of the second focus group, ten recommendations were drafted and work has began to implement those recommendations. The four researchers are writing a joint report for MRCPOWH and will submit it as a working paper.

For more information contact: **Maroussia Hajdukowski-Ahmed**, 525-9140, ext. 23758, ahmedm@mcmaster.ca.

Women with Chronic Physical Disabilities: Women and Multiple Sclerosis.

Funded by MRCPOWH, Hamilton-Wentworth Home Care and by the McMaster Arts Research Board, this participatory action research allowed women with MS to come together to discuss their support needs and to decide on further action. A report entitled, **"Support Needs for Women with Multiple Sclerosis,"** has been submitted to Hamilton Wentworth Home Care and is now available as MRCPOWH's Technical Report Series #2. Academic papers are being presented at conferences and submitted to journals by Mary O'Connor, Jacqueline Low and Julia Shelley. Discussions about changes in services are now being undertaken. The women themselves have continued to meet as a support group. Contact person: **Mary O'Connor**, 525-9140, ext. 23731, (e-mail: moconnor@mcmaster.ca).

"Your mental health affects your physical health ... we're all one piece .... your MS isn't separate from your happiness ... you're all one person ... you're not made up of MS and then some other as if the other part doesn't matter"

Sarah, Focus Group B, **Support Needs for Women With Multiple Sclerosis**.

Grassroots Communities Action and Research Program

This community led initiative funded by MRCPOWH has collected a series of powerful stories from women in the Hamilton Region about women, work and health. Authors of the stories include social service workers, teen mothers, immigrant women, native women, women in prison, workers in women's shelters, and activists, among others. An introduction is being written and the collection will be submitted to a publisher this term. Contact person: **Mary O'Connor**, 525-9140, ext. 23731 (e-mail:moconnor@mcmaster.ca).

Positive Work Environments for Women with Disabilities

A Steering Committee consisting of academic and community investigators are continuing to work on this project funded by MRCPOWH and McMaster Arts Research Board. Six focus groups with persons with disabilities in paid jobs or in volunteer jobs met in Spring 1995. In the Summer, focus groups data were transcribed and coded for analysis. Data is now being analyzed and a draft report of the results will be prepared shortly. Those interested in the project may contact: **Işık Urla Zeytinoğlu**, telephone 525-9140 ext. 23957, e-mail: zeytino@mcmaster.ca.

"I think no matter whether you're disabled or not everybody has limitations."

S6, a focus group participant
Positive Work Environments for Women and Men with Disabilities: Results of Focus Groups

A Consumer-Designed Program to Address the Needs of Mothers who Access the Family Law System: Community Consultation Phase 1

This participatory research project conducted by **Karen Bridgman-Acker**, community researcher and MSW student, and **Jane Aronson**, School of Social Work, was completed in 1995-96. Nine focus groups were held to encourage women to voice their experiences, their concerns and their suggestions for reform to services and programs that could assist women as they navigate the family law system. Current initiatives in this areas are being monitored by the Mothers Family Law Advocacy Project, the advisory group formed to steer this research project. A final written report is in process as part of Karen's research project for graduate studies. A presentation on the research methodology, the issues and the results, was made in Montreal in June at the Canadian Health Promotion & Population Health conference. Any women interested in the research can contact **Karen Bridgman-Acker** at 527-3823 ext. 3433.

VI COMPLETED RESEARCH PROJECTS FUNDED BY MRCPOWH

Patricia Daenzer, School of Social Work, report to be submitted,***"Health Experiences & Indicators Among Black Female Sole Parents in Hamilton-Wentworth***"

Nora Gold, School of Social Work, submitted a report entitled ***"Using Participatory Research to Help Promote the Physical and Mental Health of Female Social Workers in Child Welfare"***

Elizabeth Graham, Department of Sociology, submitted a report, ***"How Women Construct Their Menstrual Experiences"***, as a graduate project

Jocelyn Hezekiah, School of Nursing, submitted a report ***"Health Promotion Strategies for Women who have Undergone Female Genital Mutilation"***

Basanti Majumdar, School of Nursing, submitted the final report of the research proposal entitled ***"Development and Testing of an Interview Guide: Interview Guide of Stress Indicators for Immigrant, Refugee and Minority Women"***

Chris Sinding submitted a Masters thesis to the School of Social Work entitled **"Supporting a Lesbian with Breast Cancer: Weaving Care Outside'Family"**

Christine Walsh's submitted a Masters thesis to the School of Social Work "***Young Mothers Social Support***"

Barbara Dabrowska-Chudyk submitted a Master's thesis to the School of Social Work on ***"An Analysis of Barriers in Integrating Educated Immigrant Women into Canadian Mainstream"***

Copies of the above reports and theses are available for consultation at the office of MRCPOWH, KTH 226A.

VII RESEARCH ACTIVITIES OF RESEARCH AFFILIATES

We warmly congratulate **Julia O'Connor** from the Department of Sociology, on her recent appointment as **Director of the National Economic and Social Council in Dublin**.

Vivienne Walters, Rhonda Lenton and Marie Mckeary, are the co-authors of ***"Women's Health in the Context of Women's Lives,"*** a report submitted to the Health Promotion Directorate, Health Canada and published by the Minister of Supply and Services Canada 1995.

Nora Gold, School of Social Work, presented ***"Work, Stress and Health: A Study of Female Social Workers at Two Children's Aid Societies"*** at the Fourth Canadian Conference on Health Promotion, June 1996, Montreal. Nora is spending the 1996-97 academic year on research leave in Israel at the Hebrew University's Institute for Urban and Regional Studies, where she will be conducting qualitative research on the relations between Orthodox and Secular Jewish women in Jerusalem.

Jocelyn Hezekiah, School of Nursing, presented ***"Caribbean Nursing Leaders: Shaping Nursing and Health Care"*** at the Nursing Honor Society Sigma Theta Tau International Research Conference, Ocho Rios, Jamaica, May 31-June 2, 1996 Jocelyn recently received a grant from The Arts Research Board for $4,900 to begin historical research on Caribbean Nursing leaders.

VIII TRAINING OF GRADUATE STUDENTS

Karen Barber (Sociology), ***Barbara Dabrowska-Chudyk*** (Social Work), ***Elizabeth Graham*** (Sociology), ***Jacqueline Low*** (Sociology), and ***Nazilla Khanlou*** (Faculty of Health Sciences) are working on individual MRCPOWH research projects. See Current Research Projects and New Projects of Graduate Students.

IX PUBLICATIONS

* Margaret Denton, **"The Linkages Between Informal and Formal Care of the Elderly"** *Canadian Journal of Aging* (forthcoming).

* M. Grant, J. Hezekiah, **"Knowledge and Beliefs about Hypertension among Female Clients in Primary Health Care Centers in Jamaica,"** *International Journal of Nursing Studies*,33(1):58-66.

* Jacqueline Low, **"Negotiating Identities, Negotiating Environments: Interpretation of the Experiences of Students with Disabilities,"** *Disability & Society*, 11(2):235-248, June 1996.

* Jacqueline Low, "**The Concept of Hardiness: A Brief but Critical Commentary**," *Journal of Advanced Nursing* (forthcoming).

* Basanti Majumdar, Shelina Ladak, Jacqueline Roberts, **"Management of Family and Workplace Stress Experienced by Women of Colour from Various Cultural Backgrounds,"** *Working Paper Series 96-9*, System-Linked Research Unit, July'96.

* Wilfreda E. Thurston, & Mary O'Connor, **"Health Promotion for Women: A Canadian Perspective,"** *Position Paper* for the Canada-U.S.A. Women's Health Forum: Preventive-Health Promotion Strategies. Ottawa, 1996.

* Vivienne Walters and Margaret A. Denton, **"The Social Production of Stress, Depression and Tiredness Among Women"**. *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* (forthcoming).

★★★★★★★★

X WORKSHOPS PLANNED

Starting in October, all workshops will take place on either the third Wednesday or last Wednesday of the month, at 12:30 pm, in Kenneth Taylor Hall, Room 705 (the Lounge).

Wednesday, September 25, Barbara Chudyk, Denise Maraj, Carolina Vidal, Maroussia Ahmed and research participants:***"Wasted Skills: Foreign Trained Female Physicians and the Costs of Accreditation".***

Wednesday, October 30, Mary O'Connor, Jackie Low, Julia Shelley and research participants: ***"Support Needs for Women with Multiple Sclerosis".***

Wednesday, November 20, Margaret Denton and representatives from community-based health care agencies: ***"Working in People's Home. Healthy Work Environment for Home Support Workers"***

WE CONNECT . . . . .

Release of the **1994 National Population Health Survey (NPHS) Microdata File** - The microdata file for the core questions on the 1994 NPHS is available free to all universities with a membership in the recently implemented Data Liberation Initiative (DLI). Since all the Health Promotion Research Centres are affiliated with member universities, you can access this file through your university library. If your library does not already have a copy, it can be ordered from Lynda Richardson, Liaison Officer, Data Liberation Initiative, Statistics Canada, 9-M.R.H. Coats Bldg., Ottawa ON K1A 0T6 tel 613-951-5904, E-mail richlyn@statcan.ca.

Since this is a new way of distributing Statistics Canada databases, there may still be some procedural bugs to work through. If you have any problems accessing the database, contact Alan Gordon, Program & Policy Analysis Division, Research & Program Policy Directorate, Health Canada, 4th floor, Jeanne Mance Bldg., Ottawa ON K1A 1B4 (tel:613-954-8838, E-mail: Allan_Gordon@isdtcvp3.hwc.ca). It would also be greatly appreciated if you would send a copy of any report or publications based on the 94 NPHS to Allan Gordon for use by Health Canada staff.

At the request of the London Sexual Assault Centre staff, ***Myrna Pond and Maroussia Hajdukowski-Ahmed*** have participated as consultants in a meeting on immigrant/refugee women victims of sexual torture.

Maxine Khan, Planned Parenthood of Hamilton is collaborating with ***Maroussia Hajdukowski-Ahmed*** on issues of common interest related to immigrant women. Maxine Khan has provided Maroussia with a list of research topics which will be distributed to interested McMaster students in departments and programs such as Sociology, Social Work, Women's Studies, Gerontology, and Health Sciences.

Maroussia Hajdukowski-Ahmed has been invited by SISO to be a member of a panel at the conference "Together" on October 3rd 1996.

Mary O'Connor continues on the Evaluation Committee of the Hamilton Wentworth Community Action for Children Program.

Mary O'Connor attended the National Health Forum's Stakeholders Conference, **"Seeking Solutions to Health and Health Care,"** in Toronto on April 19-21, 1996, at which there were debates over values, the determinants of health, evidence-based research, public/private financing, pharmaceuticals and the organization of Health Services. A report on the conference has been published entitled, "National Forum on Health. Dialogue: Seeking Solutions to Health and Health Care." published by the National Forum on Health. (Fax: (613) 954-0947; e-mail: forum@hpb.hwc.ca; www:http://www.hwc.ca:8200)

Mary O'Connor attended the Canada-U.S.A. **Women's Health Forum** in Ottawa, Aug. 8-10, 1996. There were plenary speeches from notable women in the health field. Workshops for participants were on key women's health issues and on infrastructure and health system issues. Mary and Billy Thurston (U of Calgary) wrote the Canadian position paper for the workshop in Preventive Health Promotion Strategies.

On the international front, ***Mary O'Connor*** visited with The Israel Association for the Advancement of Women's Health in June in Jerusalem. The Association is a non-profit organization founded in 1994 by health professionals and social scientists. It is directed by Amy Argar and chaired by Judith Posner and it is dedicated to all aspects of the promotion of women's health.

Işık Urla Zeytinoğlu is a member of the Steering Committee of the Alternative Model Development Advisory Board. This is a committee examining possible alternatives to shelters for women of immigrant, ethnic, visible minority backgrounds. She is a member of the Health Action Planning Committee of Health Action Task Force, Hamilton-Wentworth and an Executive Member of the Canadian Industrial Relations Association (CIRA) and the Humanities & Social Sciences Federation of Canada, General Assembly Member (CIRA representative).

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On Sunday September 8, 1996, Halton and Hamilton-Wentworth will be joining together for their first **Mother-Daughter Walk for Heart and Stroke,** Coronation Park, Oakville.

More research. More education. That's the goal of the Women's Heart Disease and Stroke Initiative. They are pursuing Canada's leading killer of women. And could use your help. For more information on the Mother-Daughter Walk call (905) 545-2400.

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The Spectator and the YWCA present: **The Real Life Wellness Series**. The following are the topics and dates:

September 16, 1996 - I'm So Stressed! We can't completely rid ourselves of stress but we can strive for life balance. Learn helpful tips to reduce your stress.

October 16, 1996 - No Bones About it! You can strengthen your bones now to prevent problems in the future. Find out what steps you need to take.

November 20, 1996 - Believe it ...Achieve it! Motivate yourself to achieve your goals. Learn how to make goal setting easy & find success in your life!

December 4, 1996 - Take off Your Cape! Are you a Superwoman? Are you a caregiver, homemaker and career woman? Learn how to take off your cape and cope!

January 8, 1997 - Looking in the Mirror.. Do you like what you see when you look in the mirror. Find out how to boost your "self" & "body" image.

February 17, '97 -Turn that frown upside down! Is it me or my hormones? Am I "Depressed"? Find out more about hormones, mood swings & anxiety.

March 19, 1997 - Give your Wallet a work-out. Empower yourself to improve your worth..financially.

April 16, 1997 - Get Back into Action! Physical activity is a big part of wellness.

May 14, 1997 - Eat Smart - Rate your Plate. Do you have good eating habits? Find out how they rate.

Sessions run from 7 - 9 pm at the Downtown Hamilton YWCA at 75 MacNab Street South. Tickets cost $5 per session. You can reserve your tickets by calling 522-9922.

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FUNDING AWARDED (EXTERNAL)

1995-1998, Byron Spencer, Margaret Denton, et al. "The Independence and Financial Security of the Elderly Population" Seniors' Independence Research Program, NHRDP, Health Canada. ($591,000).

1996-98 Margaret Denton and Iąık Urla Zeytinoŋlu "Healthy Work Environments in Community Based Health and Social Services". SSHRC, Strategic Grant Theme: Women and Change, ($83,000).

WORKING PAPER SERIES

MRCPOWH Working Paper Series & Technical Report Series are now available at the Centre, KTH 226A, at a cost of $3.00 each. Please make cheque payable to McMaster University.

#1. **"A Theoretical and Methodological Framework for Research on Women, Work and Health"** by Margaret Denton, Maroussia Hajdukowski-Ahmed, Mary O'Connor, Karen Williams, and Iąık Urla Zeytinoŋlu, June 1994, pp. 35.

#2. **"Women and Multiple Sclerosis: Models, Needs and (Support) Services"** by Catherine Hopwood, Sept. 1994, pp. 52.

#3. **"Women with Disabilities and Positive Work Environments: A Literature Review"** by V. Chouinard, M. Denton, M. Westmorland, I.U. Zeytinoŋlu, May'95, pp.33.

#4. **"Towards Indigenous Notions of Women's Empowerment in India"** by Karen Trollope will be available shortly.

#5. **"The Impact of Work on Women's Health"** by Iąık Urla Zeytinoŋlu, Margaret Denton, Maroussia Hajdukowski-Ahmed, & Mary O'Connor, February 1996, pp. 26.

#6. **"Age Differences in Canadian Women's Own Perceptions of Their Health,** by Margaret Denton & Vivienne Walters, September 1996.

TECHNICAL REPORT SERIES

#1. **"Healthy Work Environments in Community Based Health and Social Service Agencies Stage One Report: Focus Group Findings"** by Margaret Denton & Iąık Urla Zeytinoŋlu, Apr.'96, pp.104.

#2. **Support Needs for Women with Multiple Sclerosis** by Mary O'Connor, Jacqueline Low and Julia Shelley, June 1996, pp. 104.

#3. **Positive Work Environments for Women & Men with Disabilities: Results of Focus Groups"** by Iąık Urla Zeytinoŋlu, Muriel Westmorland, Pam Pringle, Margaret Denton & Vera Chouinard will be available shortly.

If you are working on a topic related to **Women/Work** (paid/unpaid) and **Health** (physical, mental, spiritual), using a qualitative approach send a copy of your paper to MRCPOWH. MRCPOWH will consider the paper for publication in its Working Paper Series.

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EDITOR of PROMOTING WOMEN'S WELLNESS
Maroussia Hajdukowski-Ahmed, with the collaboration of **Ann Greene**.